



THE DRUMMER



www.senecarocksaudubon.org

November/December 2018

Volume 35, No.2



Experience Belize

November 14 Program

Ken Nicholson, a birder from Tidioute, will present this program. It will show some of the sights, birds, culture, activities and food a visitor can enjoy in Belize — and just six hours away!

Ken writes: I have always been interested in the natural world around me—spent many nights tent camping, canoeing the Allegheny River and noticed all those birds around me but could not identify all of them. For a number of years I worked for James King, an avid birder in Tidioute, and his sightings of various birds sparked more interest in bird watching! In 2005 my son became involved with the Breeding Bird Atlas program and asked my wife and

me to help walk the blocks looking for birds. When we started seeing all the different warblers—"spark bird"— we were hooked and began serious bird watching. Since then we have traveled across the 49 states several times and in the winter travel to Central America. Not only has the birding been a pleasure, meeting many other birders who have been helpful friends has been a blessing, and has taken us to many beautiful areas of our country.

Annual Members' Night Plus Get Ready to Count!

December 12 Program

This is your night to shine. Members are invited to share anything loosely related to birding such as photographs, books, equipment, a "close encounter" story or sighting, a travel tale or backyard adventure. Bring a flash drive with your photos or something to pass around. Plan on a few minutes or perhaps 10 minutes at most.

Let the counting begin on December 15. Yes, we will hold our chapter's 32nd Christmas Bird Count on a Saturday this year. Teams will be organized for the count day following member sharing. We welcome two additions to the CBC organizers. This year Debbie McCanna will be the data

*Our meetings are held at the
Clarion Free Library, lower level.
Come early to socialize -
programs begin at 6:30 pm.*

compiler and Danette Karls will be the Feeder Watcher compiler.

All teams in the field and feeder watchers will be counting within the count circle. A map of the count circle is on our website at www.senecarocksaudubon.org under the tab, Go Birding, Bird Counts.

New this year, our annual tally will take place at noon on Wednesday, December 19 for a lunch at the Water Run Bistro. Seneca Rocks will have a private room where individuals may order lunch from the Bistro menu. All selections are \$8 including entrée, side and beverage. Taxes and gratuity are included in the \$8. We think that meeting the Wednesday after the count day during the daytime will become a tradition. The Bistro is located at 300 Water Run Rd in Clarion, off of route 68 next to Computer Support. The Bistro is located inside the main entrance of the residential building.

Mark your calendars for counting on December 15 and tallying on December 19.



*Golden Eagle courtesy of Terry Sohl,
South Dakota Birds and Birding*

Hawkwatch Field Trip

~ Michael Leahy

Make plans now to join trip leader, Michael Leahy for hawk watching at Allegheny Front Hawk Watch located between Johnstown and Bedford. At 2,860 ft. above sea level, Allegheny Front is the highest hawk watch in Pennsylvania and offers exceptional 180 degree views to the east with many birds passing at eye level.

More information on the hawkwatch can be found here: <http://www.alleghenyplateauaudubon.org/hawk-watch.php>.

The trip is planned for the weekend of November 17th & 18th. This trip, hopefully, will coincide with the height of the Golden Eagle migration with decent numbers of Red-tails and other species also passing through. This site annually has one of the highest Golden Eagle counts in Pennsylvania for the fall migration.

For those wishing to carpool to the watch, we will meet at the parking lot of the Clarion Mall at 7:00 am on 11/17. Parking at the watch site can sometimes be limited so please consider riding with

Owl Prowl



We will meet on Wednesday, November 7 (alternate date November 8) at 6:00 p.m., standard time then. The location will be the same as last year, SGL 63 parking lot on Roberts Hill Road off of Rt. 208, 1/2 mi. south of Shippenville. We will have seven stops and take about two hours. Everyone bring a flashlight and hope for some owls.

The *Drummer* is the newsletter of Seneca Rocks Audubon Society (SRAS), PO Box 148, Clarion, PA 16214. SRAS is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. The *Drummer* is published 4 times per year—September, November, March & May.

The *Drummer* is available on our website in Adobe pdf and may be read or downloaded from the site – www.senecarocksaudubon.org.

Members are encouraged to contribute announcements, articles, photos, etc., to Editor Flo McGuire, 609 Ponderosa Lane, Tionesta, PA 16353 (814 755-3672) or email at fmcguire1@verizon.net.

others. I can accommodate three others if you'll be staying over for both days. It is a three hour drive to the watch site and we'll make several comfort stops on the way with the final stop at a Sheetz outside of Johnstown where you can get lunch for the day if you like.

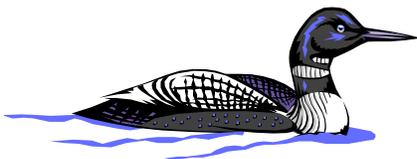
If you plan to drive on your own, you can plug this address into your GPS and it will take you to the hawkwatch: *581 Lambert Mountain Road, Schellsburg, PA*. Be aware that some GPS units will show the address as being past the gate. There is a sign and gate on the right at the end of the lane back to the watch so just look for that when you get close.

I plan to be at the watch for the weekend and everyone would be welcome to attend both or either dates. There is a quaint motel a short drive from the watch with clean, comfortable rooms. Bedford, Somerset and Johnstown are all within a reasonable drive with a variety of accommodations.

The watch is a very easy short walk from the parking area and is handicapped accessible. Dress for the weather and bring more coats, hats and gloves than you think you will need. The weather on the ridge can be very different than the weather in the valley. Bring a lunch, beverages and a comfortable chair. There is a port-a-john on site.

Please let me know if you plan to attend and what your travel plans will be. Please make sure you send me your email address or phone number so that I can contact you should the need arise. If the weather is going to be bad, that day will be canceled. There's no use making the long trip if there won't be any birds to see.

Contact me with any questions. Phone or text – 814-229-1648 or email – mr1706@gmail.com.



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<https://www.facebook.com/SenecaRocksAudubon>



Red-breasted Nuthatch photo by Jeffrey Hall

Big Sit = Big Success!

~ Jeffrey Hall

The "Big Sit" on October 13, SRAS's first participation in this nationwide event, was a resounding success. In a "Big Sit," participants identify all the birds they see or hear, but the observers must be within a 17-foot diameter circle (the birds are free to come and go as they choose!) Meg and Nick Kolodick's backyard, with a variety of vegetation types, many bird feeders, and an outstanding water feature, is ideal for a "Big Sit," and they generously welcomed seven SRAS stalwarts during the course of the day. Going 'above and beyond' they even provided lunch, hot drinks, and treats, earning our gratitude both for their wonderful birds and their wonderful hospitality.

Twenty-eight species of birds were identified during our Big Sit. The Kolodicks' water feature often attracts migrating warblers, both in spring and autumn, and one bay-breasted warbler made a brief (and unphotographed) appearance. Red-breasted nuthatches attracted the most attention; this is an irruption year for these northern birds and our "sitters" were constantly entertained by their antics. Some of the birds were only heard, such as Carolina wren, and others flew overhead, including common merganser and crow. But,

stationed on the deck and taking refuge during the many short rain showers, our SRAS Big Sit team observed, recorded, and enjoyed them all!

Attendees included:

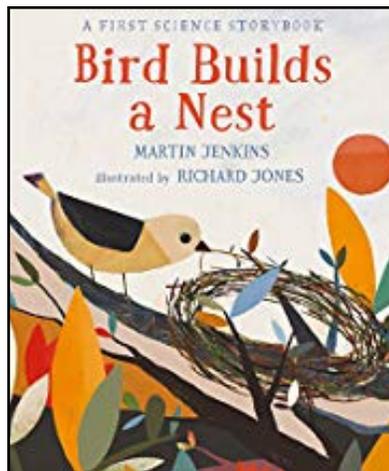
Jim Wilson, Duane Mercer, Judy Rearick, Gary Edwards, Nick and Meg Kolodick, Jeffrey Hall, Mike Leahy, and Deb Freed



Eastern Towhee photo by Jeffrey Hall

Birds seen: [in order of sighting]

1. Northern Cardinal
2. Black-capped chickadee
3. Tufted titmouse
4. White-breasted nuthatch
5. Downy woodpecker
6. Red-breasted nuthatch
7. American goldfinch
8. White-throated sparrow
9. Mourning dove
10. House finch
11. Golden-crowned kinglet
12. Bay-breasted warbler
13. Red-bellied woodpecker
14. Blue jay
15. American robin
16. Eastern towhee
17. House sparrow
18. Song Sparrow
19. Chipping sparrow
20. American crow
21. Northern flicker
22. Cedar waxwings
23. Dark-eyed junco
24. European starling
25. Carolina wren
26. Common merganser
27. Hairy woodpecker
28. Sharp-shinned hawk



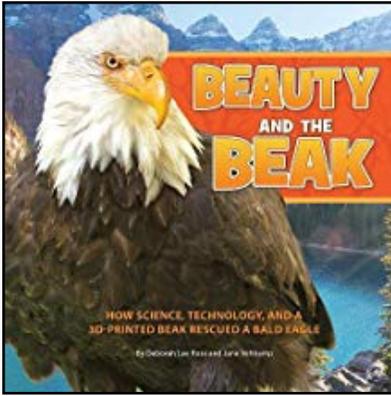
Books for Local Libraries

~ Paulette Colantonio

Continued from our last issue, the nonfiction and poetry books to be donated to local libraries are described here.

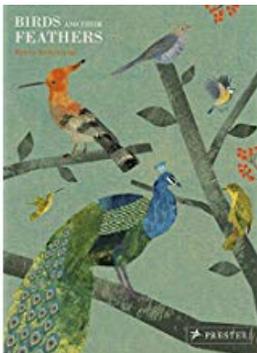
Nonfiction books are: *Bird Builds a Nest: A First Science Storybook*, *Beauty and the Beak: How Science, Technology, and a 3D-Printed Beak Rescued a Bald Eagle*, and *Birds and Their Feathers*.

In the first selection, Bird wakes up, has a quick breakfast of worm, and then embarks on the arduous task of building her nest. This is the simplistic plot of *Bird Builds a Nest*, the first book in a planned series entitled *A First Science Storybook* from Candlewick Press. Jenkins, the author and a biologist, carefully employs vocabulary about the forces of pushing, pulling, and gravity into the text. Mixed-media illustrations gently reinforce the storyline. In the back of the book, simple sentences define a force and readers are encouraged to look back “to find some places” where Bird is acting out that concept. There is an index. Young children could easily act out the action in this text, taking science class into the realm of theater. What fun! Beautifully crafted for “budding scientists,” it is recommended for preschool to grade three and is written on a 1.5 Reading Level.



Lyrical words and stunning photographs pull the reader into *Beauty and the Beak*. The plot follows the hatching event of a female bald eagle until her fourth year of maturity. “The

eagle’s head and tail feathers started to turn white. Her beak and eyes began to turn golden yellow.” The idyllic narrative of life in Alaska is shattered when the bird is shot, the bullet destroying her beak. The starving creature is discovered in a landfill, attempting to eat. The eagle, now named Beauty, is eventually taken to a raptor center in Idaho by a biologist specializing in raptors. Then Veltkamp, along with an engineer and a dentist, create a 3D-printed beak for the bird. Will the prosthetic device work? Will Beauty return to the wild? The authors, Rose and Veltkamp append 16 additional pages of information to enhance the storyline. Topics are varying, including the anatomy of eagles, prosthetic devices, Beauty’s location today, and what to do when you find an injured bird. A list of additional resources includes the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird.org, and an engineering curriculum site with activities to make a prosthetic beak! Written on a 6 Reading Level, this scientific yet easily read volume is suitable for grade three to junior high.

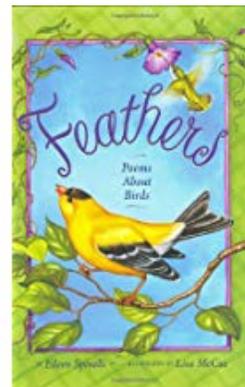


Next, the third nonfiction book, *Birds and Their Feathers*, is written and illustrated by Britta Teckentrup. Starting with the pale end pages adorned with down feathers and semiplumes, readers are gently pulled into the world of plumology, the science of

feathers. This 87-page book imparts scientific information about feathers and how they serve a

bird, with easily understood lyrical language and earthtone-textured illustrations. A heading in bold large font announces an area of interest, and facts about the topic are written in smaller text blocks. For example, the Structure of a Feather is presented as a heading. Then, Types of Feathers are discussed in accompanying text blocks for several pages. Some other topics given by the author include colors of feathers and how they are produced, feathers for flying, hovering, climbing, and even snowshoeing! Facts that simply astound are inserted into the book, too. For instance, on page 23, the reader learns a ruby-throated hummingbird has “a beautiful and colourful plumage from around 940 feathers.” Teckentrup reports about feathers in culture and mythology, also. In ancient Egypt, “a person’s soul had to be light as a feather to pass the judgement of Ma’at – the Egyptian goddess of truth, justice, and the underworld.” The last topic, The Feather on the Moon, tells the story of David Scott, an astronaut on the Apollo 15 mission, performing a science demonstration ala Galileo using a falcon feather! Written on a 6.3 Reading Level, this book has an interest level for intermediate to adult budding ornithologists.

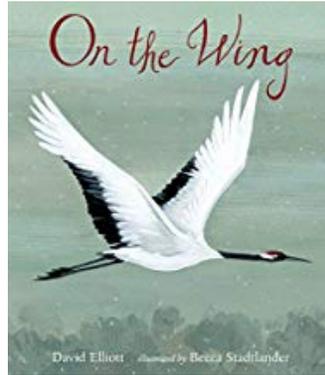
Last, poetry comprises the final category of books presented this year. The titles offered are: *Feathers: Poems About Birds*, *Wake Up!* and *On the Wing*



A colorful dust jacket sporting an American goldfinch and a hummingbird framed by a purple and green border will invite children to open and read “Feathers: Poems About Birds” by Eileen Spinelli, illustrated by Lisa McCue. 27 species of birds are featured in short

rhyming poems, capturing the behavior, habitat, or peculiarity of said bird, often with subtle humor. An example is, “The stately secretary bird won’t sort your mail,/ won’t type a word./ Won’t take your

coat./ Won't hang your hat./ Won't answer phones./ And that is that." Some of the featured-feathered characters are familiar such as the robin, crow, and pigeon. Others will entice the young reader to research more about them, such as the tailorbird, the Australian lyrebird, and nighthawk. "Soon after sunset/ nighthawk flies/ toward the city's bright-lit skies,/ its wings a flight of lullabies." Support for the poetry is rendered with watercolor and acrylic on single or double-spread pages alive with detail. Most pages are bordered with ethnic patterns, garlands, or flowers. This book is simply lovely! A few factual sentences about each avian actor is appended in the book. In the classroom or at home, this physically smaller book could be used to introduce poetry, a science lesson about birds, or geography. It is written on a 3 Reading Level and would be a wonderful read aloud.



A wide variety of winged species are showcased in *On the Wing*, by David Elliott, the final book of poetry chosen this fall. Seventeen avian gems come alive in carefully constructed poems lifted by acrylic gouache illustrations, mirroring the poetry and presenting

the habitat of each bird. Some unique physical or behavioral characteristic is captured for the reader/ listener. For example, the humor in this minute poem is supported by two closely painted pictures of said bird, obviously capturing its "puffiness!" Elliott writes, "The Puffin is unique-/ especially its beak." In "The Caribbean Flamingo", the special color of the bird is rendered in concise words: Singular... an ember waiting to ignite./ In multitude... a conflagration! The sky is set alight!" A more introspective feeling is evoked in "The Andean Condor." "You watched the ancient empires come, then go./ How and why they vanished—a secret that you know./ Is it your knowledge of this mystery that we fear?/ Or that one day we, too, might disappear?" Although written on a 4 Reading Level, the book uses rich vocabulary for older children to explore. Candlewick Press offers a Teachers' Guide to support language arts, art, math, and science.



Wake Up! is another collaborative work of art created by poet Helen Frost and photographer Rick Lieder. The sun invites the reader in a simple rhyming quatrain to trek outside

in the spring day and view the miraculous life all around. "Sun says, Wake up-/ come out and explore./ New life is exploding/ outside your door!" Accompanying the verse are amazing photographs, many using a macro lens, the content expertly staged by Lieder. Some of the creatures starring in this book are gray garden slug eggs, a sandhill crane chick, newly hatched cellar spiders, domestic lambs, and baby robins in the nest. Even the end pages boast photography with interesting bocca. A "glossary" of photos with scientific information about the diverse subjects is included in the back of the text, which younger readers may find challenging. The poetry in this primary book is written on a 1 Reading Level, but naturalists of all ages will enjoy this ode to spring, revisiting many times.

Cook Forest Outing
 Tuesday, October 31 at 7:00 pm - '**Cathedral by Candlelight**' Want to experience something different this year for Halloween instead of the standard "trick-or-treaters"? Walk back in time with us into the depths of the Forest Cathedral with an historical character from the past. Come view the ancient forest as we walk beneath the giants by candlelight. Either a French Marine from the 1750s who saw these massive trees 250 years ago, or a lumberman from the 1800s will be there to guide us. Candy and hot chocolate will be served at the Log Cabin Inn Environmental Learning Classroom. Bring your flashlights! (2 hrs)

Common Nighthawk Migration Counts

Oil City Marina, Foot of Wyllis Street, Oil City

~Gary Edwards

Year 13 of the Common Nighthawk Migration Count at the Oil City Marina was not a record year, but, in the end, 609 nighthawks were counted, just under the 654 average; 33 other species were also seen. A Merlin flew by on three evenings, making an appearance for six of the past seven years. Others of note were Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, and Common Raven.

We started on August 14 and ended September 10. Early on the count began at 6:30 pm and ended at 8:30; by the mid-September, we were starting at 6:00 and ending at 8:00. The highest daily count was 148 birds on August 28. As usual, the second hour was far and away the most productive with about 85% of the birds recorded. The records show that peak migration generally occurs from August 24 to August 30.

As usual, Meg and Nick Kolodick never missed an evening and Jim Wilson counted on 19 evenings. We're always glad to have visitors and this year we were pleased to see Deb Freed, Mal Hays, Michael Leahy, Flo and Jim McGuire, Kirby Neubert, and Russ States. See you all next year.

Millcreek Access to Clarion River, off Fisher Rd.

~Mal Hays

This was the second year for this count. We started on August 14 and ended September 7, with a total of 710 birds. Our largest nights were August 26 with 271, August 24 with 80, and August 31 with 77. Thirty-eight% of the birds were seen between 7:30-8:00, 30% between 6:30-7:00, 22% between 7:00-7:30, and 10% between 8:00-8:30. People who helped count were: Mal Hays, Larry Towse, Ron Montgomery, Gary Edwards, Ruth Schurr, Deb Freed, Carole Winslow, Janice Horn, Tabby Shaw, Jeff Diamond, Valery Swanson, Don Swanson, and Harlen Yeany. Our total last year was 567.

Join **Seneca Rocks Audubon Society** and



Enjoy the world of birds



Protect wildlife & its habitat



Promote education that fosters appreciation of the natural environment

Benefits of Chapter Membership



Getting outdoors with others who enjoy nature



Networking with birders and naturalists to explore our area's special habitats

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society Membership Application

(Please print)

Name _____

eMail _____

Address _____

Street _____

City State Zip _____

Chapter memberships are due in September each year

Membership - \$10.00 Please make your checks payable to Seneca Rocks Audubon Society, or SRAS

Mail to:

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society, PO Box 148, Clarion, PA 16214

Upcoming Dates & Events

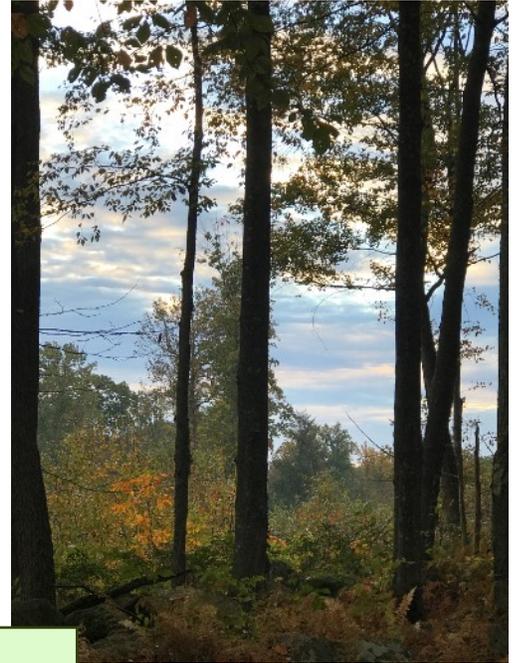
Bird seed pickup is from October 27 through November 3
November 7 (alternate November 8), 6 pm - Owl Prowl at
SGL 63, Roberts Hill Rd., Shipperville

November 14 Program - Kenneth Nicholson, "Experience
Belize"

November 17-18 - Allegheny Front Hawkwatch, Leader
Michael Leahy

December 12 Program- Members' Night and CBC Planning

Christmas Bird Count - Saturday, December 15



SRAS Leadership Team

Deb Freed	Media & Membership	226-4719
Paulette Colantonio	Nature Books	797-2031
Pat Conway	Facebook	752-2036
Gary Edwards	Outreach Programs/CBC	676-3011
Jeffrey Hall	Facebook	732-0258
Janice Horn	Treasurer/Birdseed Sale	226-7367
Mike Leahy	Beaver Creek	229-1648
Flo McGuire	Newsletter & Website	755-3672
Ron Montgomery	Outreach Programs	764-6088
Jim Wilson	Nest Boxes & Feeders	676-5455

There is something infinitely
healing in the repeated refrains
of nature - the assurance that
dawn comes after night, and
spring after winter.

~ Rachel Carson

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society
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